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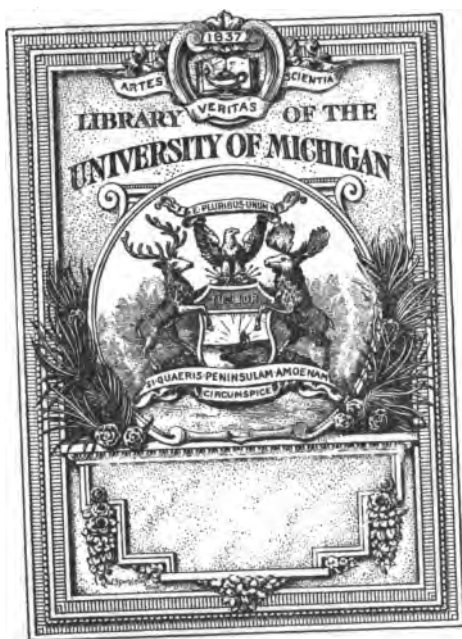
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APOLLO & KEATS ON BROWNING

A Fantasy and Other Poems
By CLIFFORD LANIER

1215-83



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APOLLO AND KEATS



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TO HER —

My lovely and steadfast comrade—Whose approval
has ever been my most welcome laurel (*love's* re-
serve yielding to the lures of Art), I offer this Vol-
ume,

LOVE'S RESERVE

TO WILHELMEIN

The poet, raptured, gazing wifeward, said :
"Thou art the self of Beauty to my sight;
From dainty feet to glory-crowned head
Thy figure shapen is in lines of light:
With perfect rhyme those lithe arms, upward spread,
A pulsing couplet form in rhythm right;
And o'er thy bosom drape the vestments white
Tenderly as words by music vested.
If verse now had the graphic warmth of sun,
If Love *could* body what his heart would hide,
If thou wert less than wifely vested nun,
Dear love of thee might yield to Art's fond pride,
And, dressed in poet's breath, these veils aside,
Thou should'st be wife and poem merged in one."

APOLLO AND KEATS ON BROWNING

A FANTASY

The god Apollo once met Master Keats,
And, greeting "howdye," passed the time o' day:
The god had quit Olympus for the street's
Diversion: tired of Heaven's celestial play,
The thefts of Mercury and high dead-beats,
Had seized his sun-spoked "wheel" and sped away
To seek in mortal haunts some novel thrill.—
As masks in German slums Dutch "*Kaiser Will.*"

"Good morning, Pol!" The bright young mortal said;
"How goes it with the gods these new, sad days?
How fare Hyperion and the mighty dead?
And sweet Endymion in the Latmian maze?
Now Pan's no more, who makes his leafy bed
To woo soft sleep amid his flocks a-graze?
When you to great Olympus make return
I would go too: my yearnings fairly burn
To know some things that earthlings cannot tell:
For instance, who world-laureate next shall be?
Whether the crusty critic goes to Hel * * *
* * * Icon or to the sweeter Castaly?
You gossip with the Muses, and right well
You, instantly, can tell an ecstasy,
Or true or false,—pray tell me, is it true
That "Algy" Swinburne is endorsed by you?"

"Softly, sweet John," Apollo answers him:—
"I'm here for *dots* myself, and fain would know
The latest venturers in the rhyming *swim*.
And, on my way, I touched at Mars to blow
A while and mend my sun-"wheel's" dented rim:
I met there Alfred Tennyson and Poe,
Just come to meet Rob. Browning, so they said,
And Lowell, Whittier, Emerson,—late dead."

A smile suffused Keats' large blue eyes at this,
And on his cheek a hectic banner burned,
While he whispered :—"Esteem it not amiss
If I recall that since I've been inurned
I've made excursions here from skyey bliss,—
A bourne reputed whence *none* hath returned,—
Invited oft, ahem! plagiarized by some,
I could not decently refuse to come."

"*Pardonnez moi!*" yawned Pol: "Don't mention it;
I guessed the reason of your being here;—
Nolens volens; aha! but let us sit
And note the passing show: d'ye know, I hear
That high emotion now all runs to wit,
Or what these mortals thus esteem,—a mere
Rehash of jokes old Pan and Bacchus made
While shepherds piped within Arcadian shade.

There's little new beneath *my* sun, alas!
Tho' moderns scatter *news* at lightning rate;
Most recent *poesy* smells of midnight gas;
Their fiction seems too realist of late,
"Affecting" greatly the tabooed *Nefas*;
Our Grecian stage was ruled by *Fas*,—high fate;
Far is the cry to Zola's, Tolstoi's tale
From old-young Homer time can never stale.

Now Dante's veins run bitter blood as gall,
But Don Quixote reaches all our hearts;
Your Milton's satans well deserve to fall,
For fighting Heaven with such old-timey darts;
Heigh ho! Since Shakspeare summoned passions all
To smile and strut their tragi-comic parts,
I've lost keen zest for literary news;
Prythee, *Mnemosyne!* another Muse!"

Replied comrade Keats :—"Thanks, Sir, for the word!
Muse number ten you mean, I'm pretty sure:
But * * excellence, like hope, is long deferred,
And slow-maturing blooms in literature
Are longest sweet. Sometime ago I heard

Thro' 'Lizbeth Barrett B., the lofty-pure,
That Mem'ry whispered, stammered, * * 'Robert
Browning',
As him her fair tenth child deemed worth her crown-
ing."

"Ah, yes indeed! Now *there's* a man and poet,"
Exclaimed Apollo, brusquely impolite;
(Keats, tho' impatient, haply would not show it:)
"*There's* one who knows when, where and how to
fight

The malady souls have and do not know it.
I'm glad to learn *this* planet swims in sight:—
For psychic power a search-light! In resource
Of thought, rhyme, rhythm, a true cosmic force!"

"But Beauty!"—broke in Keats, "and Beauty's all-
She-cares-to-know!—the holiness of monked
A'Kempis' beauteous Truth in musical
Sound-shallops sailed by Fairy winds and junked
Chinesely! How goes this line for metric fall,—
'And there my triumph's straw-fire flared and farked'?
'Tis his, I swear; and, by Ben Jonson!, I * * * *
At first spurt 'gan to think of idiotcy.

Where is the fitting sound to theme and sense,
The *onomatopoeia* singers chant?
He makes remorseless drafts at mind's expense:
Who is it that "Sordello" does not daunt?
No soundfulness emit *his* lute-strings tense:
No flies on summer eves their murmurous haunt
Betray, nor magic casements charmed delude
This Titan of consummate altitude."

Thus Keats;—and seemed like one a vision fled
With all the music of its waking dream:
He bowed his auburn head, brown-ringleted,
With such humility as doth beseem
One willing to be wholly perfected:
His slighting criticism to redeem
Or 'scape, he wished himself upon the back
Of his fire-nostrilled Carian steeds, jet-black.

"Quite true, from your ideal-sensuous point
Of view, my friend; virility run mad;
His 'soul bade fight, whose sword-like words pierce
joint
Of mail and cleave the snaky folds of bad,
Elusive motive:—how he cries, 'Aroint
Thee, Satan! to old Mephisto!' Egad!—
Invents a brand-new instrument, this man,
Strung with, for wires, the nerves of Caliban.

Some singers fain would galvanize dead things
To artificial motion, reproduce
The tones of Sappho's mythologic strings,
By trick of form and rhetorician's ruse
To make us deem the bardic seer sings;
But this one is Electron's self; the juice
Of Man's deep inmost spirit feeds his springs:
True sap of soul his forest boles enrings."

Thus speaking, the enthusiastic god
Sprang to his feet and 'gan declaim aloud
Some Browning verse, whirling his shepherd's rod
As if he stood alone on his own cloud,
'Stead of the peopled City's trim-set sod;
And soon was jostled by the curious crowd
Of eager sight-seers pushing rank on rank,
Dead-bent on circling every new-found crank.

Unnoting he himself was cynosure,
He rattled off verse after verse with *vim*
And *verve poetique*, increasing with each newer
Line and piece: now 'twas a jubilant hymn
Homeric-like, anon a lyric pure,
And then some Russian wolfish legend grim,
"Ivan Ivanovitch," then "*Prospice*,"—
That pæan over death, Love's victory.

Friend Keats was an extensive traveller,
In flesh and out; had many a spectacle
Beheld, (of dream-knit knots unraveller

And chief high priest of Mab's conventicle) ;
But here, forsooth, the gentlest caviller,
The mildest dude who e'er wore monocle
Might see how quite ridiculous it is
To chant dithyrambs in big modern Cities :

And that, too, garbed in very ancient dress
Of, say, some many thousand fashions syne ;
Apollo's ample vestment's Greek excess
Was girdled by a goat-skin-leathern twine ;
And, as Musagetes, his tousled tress
Entwined, vine-like, his shouldered thrysus' time :
Even Oscar Wilde went not with bow and lyre,
Which suit not metropolitan mire.

His comrade Keats was also out of style,
Whose trousers, cut antiquely, bagged at knees,
Smacked of his native, right, "tight little isle"
Where tailors shape pretty much as they please :
These clearly were two tramps, "plum-full" of guile,
Or madmen else whom officers must sieze :
In shorter time than takes to tell the tale
The bards were haled and tumbled into jail.

Time thus hath often dealt with sweetest, best,
Since Socrates the hemlock drank and died ;
'Tis strange the world knows not its loveliest—
('Tis bridegroom Life denying Truth his bride)—
Savonarola, Bruno, all the rest
Of mortal Christs folly hath crucified :
At Peter's touch old lameness leaps uprisen,
Yet John and he are thrown in common prison.

Keats' sunny face was wreathed in smiles, for he
Enjoyed a joke even at his own expense :
Brightness he'd radiate like a star, nor he
Did ever lack for joyous mirth intense :
Imaging again aught glorious he saw, he
Reflected too Wit's soul and humor's sense :
"To jail "*Theanthropos*, without revoke,
For spouting Browning, oh ! this *was* a joke !"

Theanthropos himself seemed not to know
That he was in arrest: the sacred stream
Of eloquence and song preserved its flow
Rippling and sparkling in the glancing gleam
Of his companion's eye and soulful glow:
Even gods might be absorbed in such a theme:
'Tis writ a Joshua made the *Sun* stand still
For slaughter: wrecks *he* now a peacefuller will.

The future was defied, the past ignored,
The present *raptus* held exclusive sway:
Reciters rarely know when friends are bored,—
And souls oft faint when they should watch and pray:
In Christ's last agony weak Peter snored,
E'en in the hour the Judas did betray:
Think not that young Keats yawned; the jailers did,—
For where's a spell to ope dull prose's lid?

The stream of Browning-song flowed on apace:
Imagine Angel Michael, Heavenly strung—
The loftiest harp of the Angelic race,
Attuned to that Celestial song outflung
When morning stars sang back creative grace,—
And at Christ's coming solar arches rung;
Or think of Israfil whose "heart's a lute,"
Or of our Georgian poet's wondrous flute:

Imagine one of these, enwrapt, inspired,
Should chant the plaint of "In Memoriam,"
Or, 'mid the blaze of the Pendragon fired,
Speak the sublime farewell of Arthur,—balm
Of incense burnt with kingly love expired,—
Blest perfume of a soul, lust-wronged yet calm!
So strangely sweet to Keats, so Heavenly odd
This *siecle-fn* poesy spoken by a god.

It seemed to him,—re-incarnated soul,—
To blend Heaven's high, with loveliest, joy of
Earth,—
All radiance of sounds in sea-like roll
And waves of deepest meaning, tensest mirth

Of seas that shout to lands 'tween pole and pole,—
Music's perfect echo of the primal birth:
A lyric *Avatar* Keats thought he heard,
Marriage of music, Wisdom,—Art's last word.

A silvery brilliance in the air did sigh
In her own bliss, and one antiphonal shade
Of sound rhymed lip with her's for sympathy;
Shapes infinitely merging grade in grade,
And voices, *timbred* multitudinously
Yet in one harmony superb arrayed,
Patterned a scene of psychic sight and sound,
And all Soul's ways one subtle union found.

Of this rare song sole auditor Keats seemed;
Apollo the *Choragus* crowned, about
Whose chant, as from a central sun, there beamed
All harmonies men know, a melodic rout
Of tones and ethers,—radiant tones that gleamed
And ethers crescive to a vibrant shout:
Beethoven, Wagner, Shakspeare, merged in one;
For was he not "*whip*" of th' omniscient Sun?

And thus it was until the close of day
When twilight's purple bathed their prison wall;
Then lo! two sacred swans, (hue-changing grey
Of pinions that o'er snowy plumage fall),
Emerge from out the last soft Western ray,
Cloud-and-light-harnessed to a chariot-ball,
And uttering flute-notes with which cygnets greet,
Fold their flight's wings at rapt Apollo's feet.

Who Keats invites into th' opaline car
And grasps his rainbow reins, filmy as rays,
Saying: "Come, twin ether-traveller! See'st yon
star,—

Big Mars! Let's visit him ere the next day's
Earthly dawn, and see how Martian poets are:
Repels us Earth: Mars' red-lined watery ways
My car and swans float on: Poor Earthlings sleep!
Go we star-calling where deep calls to deep!"

Whereat soft trillings of a fluted hymn
Succeed : the prison air a tinted mist
Resolves into : Earth-cloud could never dim
And lighten *so* to lovelier amethyst :
A woman's tear—from eyes with love's woe swim
And brighten so with love's spring gladness kissed :
Apollo's swans, and car, with Keats, his guest,
Have vanished quick into the fading West.

ANTINOUS TO HADRIAN

DONE AT BAESA, EGYPT, ABOUT 130 A. D.,

Greeting, Hadrian, mighty and adored!
Greeting! and then farewell. Patiently hear!
Apollo hath to mine own demon spoke,
And 'tis his Heavenly message that I pass
On to Thee. Thou, after I go, shalt say,
"No man had purer love than this one." I
For this do yearn my soul and agonize:—
Should any man do wrong that good may come?
The high gods know their better from our worse,
And Romans deem that knowledge god-like, high,
That points the firm-knit mind, how, when, and where
To die; that thrones the sovereignty of life,
Nowhere but in the strong-resolved soul.
These Christians stagger not at aught *they* hope;
I have Apollo's promise: that is sure;
And since the God hath sworn by Styx and poured
Its waters in libation, he'll perform.
A new Arcadia openeth to mine eyes
Whereof but one man's heart hath ever dreamed,—
We have discoursed of him:—'tis Christ alone.
He came from Heaven and brought upon his wings
The pollen of its flowers, its honied dew;
He came to say that God is love and light;
That he who loveth *not* doth not know God.
If thou should'st ask me now, what god is this,
Saying, "There is no other God, save one,"
I can but answer, "Jove, the Lord of all."
Thou know'st that we full oft have pondered this,
And said,—"the Old doth pass before the New:
Lo! vanished Pan when Christ the lover came."
And yet Apollo speaks to me, compels
Me, pours a sad, sweet chrism on my head,
And seems to raise to his anointed lips
The trump of Revelation, saying,—"O Son,
The Roman world depends from one alone;

Hadrian hath it bound by chords of strength,
 But near to rounding is his circled life;
 Persephone demands him, Earth-complete:
 The willing changeling welcome is to her,
 And voluntary Expiation sweet
 As deepest-hearted brew of lily wine
 That bubbles honied for the bee's delight.
 She pulls the bloom—vicarious sacrifice—
 And sinks enchanted down to realms of Dis.
 Thus when the body dies it is new born:
 The perishing dissolves, and then begins
 The living flame that never shall be quenched.
 Do thou for Hadrian, thy friend, this boon;
 He knows it not, nor will he till thou'rt gone;
 Then shall his gratitude, a flame eterne,
 And love of all the Roman world light up
 A bright new star, whose kindling flashing beams
 The very gods, as *flamens majores*,
 Shall seek to light their sacred torches with:
 As thou descendest in the holy stream
 To-morrow, Lo! thy star the zenith climbs
 To wheel with circles of the Heavenly powers.
 Teach men by this that thou can'st dare to die
 For him thou lovest, lord of thy brave soul:
Thou savest Hadrian, and he the world."
 Thus breathes Apollo, and my demon yearns
 To bloom, effulgent rose and lily star.
 O Hadrian! my span I yield to thee.
 Let not true friendship's purity be stained
 With aught of impure memory: High Arts
 Of Painting, Sculpture, Poetry forbid!
 Forbid it Emperor, Apollo, Jove!
 Let carven stone in forms immortal tell
 To all the cycles yet to be of men
 The story of our tragic deathless love!
 Thou know'st what commerce of the mind we had.
 Pluto, Persephone, Apollo, ye
 That guide me through the golden Bybline mists
 Of sacred Nile beyond the founts of light,
 Where dwell the primal sources of all life,

Ye only may replace my Hadrian!
 Once more and we had pierced the riddle dim
 That vexes all the ages: Christ! How strange
 That yon despised Jew should come so near
 To mine eternal laurel with his crown,
 Whose every point a ruby love-tear shines!
 He came unto His own; they knew him not.
 Antinous hath been a prince of earth:
 Youth, Beauty, Luxury's soft down and all
 That riches, all that termless power, can buy,
 All joy that from divine Amalthæa's horn
 Of Plenty flows,—Concord, Abundance, Peace:—
 All exaltation, art, and wisdom give,
 Like wings, to float the soul to high delight:—
 All these were mine. I yield them all to love.
 No man hath greater love than this, my friend.
 Antinous doth give his mighty all,
 Life, passion, lust, emotion, body, mind,—
 That thou, dear Atlas of our Roman world,
 May live thy span of life and love, *plus* mine;
 That all the juices of thy ripened age
 Shall bound with vigor of mine apriled youth;
 That thy hoar wisdom wedded to my wit,
 Thy science to my youth's prescience knit,
 Thy knowledge joined to that youth hopes to know,
 Thine age to dotage come without defect
 Of dotage, thy defect perfect become,
 May render thee, all-potent Hadrian,
 True Demiurge and lord, Rome's demigod,
 To rule all peoples and her might maintain:
 Greeting, Hadrian, mighty and adored!
 Hadrian! Antinous now sighs *farewell!*

DIED IN VACATION

C. L. D.

The sweet boy's eyes are shut in death:
A flower-strewn pillow rests his head:
No more his child-lips voice the breath
Of romp and laughter: he is dead.

How listless droop the boughs he played
Among! Softly the pigeons coo!
One frolic Sun—space seeks a shade
To question sadly if he knew

Whither Lanier has gone,—to school?
To learn humanity's last gain
Of teaching, and the latest rule
Of life's sharp quest and labor's pain?

Ah no! the fruit of Knowledge now
He eats in Heavenly gardens where
No angel stands with frowning brow,
With flaming sword and right arm bare.

He lingers now on play-grounds large,
Whose games enchant with mystic spell,—
In Paradise by crystal marge
Of *campus* turfed with asphodel.

His merry prattlings are not heard
That gave all hearts contagious mirth:
No more his elfin smile and word
Lighten the leaden air of earth,—

Where now the lonesome wren complains,—
The red-bird calls for his play-mate:
The jay alone harshly arraigns,
And sparrows sit disconsolate.

Say'st thou, *Antinous* is dead,
For whom the plum and peach trees grew?
In whose behalf the clouds o'erhead
Drew "hop-scotch" figures on the Blue?

For whom the gulf-warm Southern breeze
Played hide-and-seek with many a turn,
And led him where youth faintly sees
Mysterious dawns of Manhood burn?

O, quick intelligence and fine!
Lithe fingers deft as ever wrought!
O, sense of life like bubbling wine!—
Heart aspen to all winds of thought!

Thy spirit felt a blame as shame,
And frowns of love a stinging stroke:
Till sunshine of forgiveness came
Thy heart in soft contrition broke.

So sensitive to changeful life,
Thine was the changing artist's mind:
With thought, wish, mood, emotion, rife,
To generous pity ever kind,—

How meltingly a call to tears
Dissolved thy being! and sympathy
Was April quick with hopes and fears:
Such tenderness did live in thee!

And thee no impish thought impure
Besmirched, nor malice tore with glee:
Thy heart with innocence was sure,
And guilelessness was found in thee!

Such loveliness were loth to fade
In nothingness and dreamless night:
O, visit where thou briefly played
And bring us glimpses of The Light!

Say not, *Antinous* is dead,
Most beautiful of Sons of Men!
Say rather he hath blithely sped
Awheel to yonder star,—again

He shall return and quickly bring
Account of his aerial run,
Each incident of happening
In orb and planet near the Sun.

Such happiness can never fade:
And never can he tire at play:
Supernal light, transcendant shade
Now make angelic holiday.

TIME, TIRELESS TRAMP

O Time, thou running tramp so fleet,
If thou would'st only lag awhile!
I pause to ease my weary feet
And thou hast sped a mile.

How long a journey may I take
With thee? Is life but just one stage?
Our next inn, death? New life, the break
Of dawning age on age?

Millenial eons round, like flowers,
Thou must have known in bud and bloom,—
And secular days from crescent powers
Waning to sunless gloom.

Didst chat with Luna ere she grew
So chastely sad and ghostly cold
About her fairness ere she knew
"The wrinkle" of growing old?

Art come to age's memory yet?
Wilt gossip of thine earlier days?
The middle countless years forget
And sing us primal lays!

A hundred thousand springs eclipse
In blank forgetfulness. Retrace
Some million stades, and on thy lips
And round thy youthful face

Let speak the word, let shine the light
That sang and shone when stars were born!
Wert thou Beginning's eremite
Unwed, alone, forlorn?

How old wert thou when Adam played
With Flora and the Fauns and Pan?
What time throned *Jah* from lustrous shade
Spake music unto man?

Beyond do vaster oceans roll?
How long canst thou expect to be?
All time thy body, timeless soul,
Hath reached maturity?

Thou seem'st a Jack-o'-lantern thought,
E'er dancing over fens of fern,
Fitful, afeared of getting caught,
And dark when thou should'st burn.

Did God exhale thee while he slept,
The very vapor of his breath,
That, breath of Life, thou yet hast kept
The Elfin-ness of Death?

A SEAWEED ON DECK IN MID-OCEAN

Brave tangle, color-glinting weed,
Thou stayest not our huge ship's speed
One little whit. Thine atom's need,
 We heed it not.
Could not Leviathan's vast greed
 Spare thee one spot?

Fierce winter gales thy cradle shook,
Within some isle-sequestered nook;
Thine ancestors there refuge took
 Against the storm,
To parent safe from alien look
 Thee nested warm.

Did thy forbears Columbus know,
When that discoverer long ago,
Solemn with prophecy of wo,
 His deck did pace,—
Whose caravels and pinnace slow
 Sargasso trace?

Mayhap they 'scaped De Soto's keel,
Whose enterprise of sword and steel
Is brave with hopes his Spaniards feel
 Of empires grand,
Yet desperate for wo or weal
 (Hidalgo band) !

Or did they look on Wesley born
To larger fate, yet now forlorn,
For still delays Conversion's dawn?
 And Oglethorpe,
Who quits with store of oil and corn
 His easeful dorp

To found asylums in the west
For debtors and all sore-oppressed?
Ye, fervid zeal, good English breast!
Ye loved e'en weeds:
Your very heart-throbs beat and pressed
For human needs!

How long, thou tiny lichen, thou
Sea-alga tossed above our prow
And rudely kept by strangers now
From out thy home,
Hast known Time's furrowing ocean-plow
Divide the foam?

What jetsam, flotsam, of sad wreck,
That lately graced some freighted deck
Of souls who danger little reck
As even we,
Hast thou seen, sorrowful, weedy speck,—
Lost, tossed at sea?

Wood mosses tame ken not the strife,
The warfare waged for merely life,
Wherewith thy battle here is rife
'Mid wind and wave:
Their days are joys of folk house-wife
From birth to grave.

Thine is the warrior-martyr's fate,
To bleeding fall without the gate
Of Israel, die, and, with no date
On sandy tomb,
To lie, and to the ages prate
Of war's sad doom.

Such would be, if this meager art
Thine only record were. Thy heart
Be comforted! A better part
May yet befall.
Impaled upon an expert's dart
Against the wall,

In some museum's richest niche,
Thou shalt high lore of science teach,
And secrets of huge ocean preach,—
 Gain out of loss!
Beyond the heaven, thou yet shalt reach,
 Of weed or moss!

THE AMERICAN PHILOMEL

Ah, sweet, our mocking-bird,
The many-tongued!
From highest top of yon church pinnacle,
Whose glittering point thus quivers into song,
His voice!
The church's faith and love
Now seem to blossom in
Nor flower nor odor, but in sound.
Gone is the day, passed with its Sabbath forms:
The zeal of Sunday-school in children's eyes,
Blazing to kindle bright the farthest isles,
Now fades in children's dreams this summer night,
And yields their fane to loveliness of song.

Balm-breathing harmony,
What tenderness is thine!
The air is all ethereal;
The moonlight soft affection's sweetest smile:
The fragrant trees are Beauty's ministers,
And dewy lawns lie tearfully a-dream.

Sweet, bird-blown flute,
Thou weavest poesy and lore in one,—
Religion, history, and song,
Wild-flowers, and wheat!
An Indian maiden with the heart of Ruth,
Withheld by tribal hate from joy and love,
And pining faithfully,
Might utter such a plaint as thine
Now is; anon
Some antique Miriam's triumph swells
In rising, crescent, cymbal-clashing notes,
Joyous, outringing as a peal of bells.

An alabaster box of Music's nard
Upon the feet of Love thou shatterest :
These drops of dew are fragrant with its sweet ;
These pendent boughs seem blessing hands ;
Out of grim shadow benedictions come ;
Moonlight like Christ's forgiveness beams :
Thy heavenly throatings whisper to the soul
Undying faith, supernal,—
Love eternal.

FOREST ELIXIRS

Inhaling strength with every breath
Soft blown across the mountain way,
I stroll where autumn's crimson death
And Summer's resurrection say

The annual rhyme of death and life.
Smooth winds the road o'er covert glade,
On upward slope, by varying strife,
For mastery of light and shade.

Here greenery hath conquered all,
And dominates a world of love;
Yon distant hill is mighty thrall
Of mastering blueness throned above.

Here find I quiet rest I seek
Far from the turbulence of men,
And mildly importune the meek
Faun-voices of the Woodland glen;

Where think not that the woods are still;
For whomsoe'er can overhear
Each runlet speaketh, and each hill,
A music hid from carnal ear.

The dumb rocks hint their history;
And myriad winged things float past
With messages of mystery
Sent from the dim leaf-shadowed vast.

All tender moss that steadfast clings
To warm the oak-root, mantle-wise,
Some answer has to questionings,
Repose for restless subtleties.

If I would stanch an anguish sore
That contumely's thrust hath made,
Or into wounds mild healing pour
Away from battle-fields of trade,

I walk amid these leafy balms—
Wood distillations magic breeds—
Upborne upon the upheld palms
Of elfin greenwood—Ganymedes,

And learn how thought is kin to prayer,—
That grace, as juices from earth's sod,
Flows through the veins of spirit where
Man's soul doth feel the touch of God.

FRIAR SERVETUS

(A PARAPHRASE)

The monk Servetus sits alone
Within his small, unfurnished cell;
Few comforts were this hermit's own—
This anchorite of book and bell.

Communion brings companionship,
And lo! he is not all alone;
A greeting trembles on his lip
For that which sudden round him shone.

In ecstasy of great delight
He bends to grasp his Saviour's hands;
Big, joyful tears spring at the sight;
He knows not if he kneels or stands.

Alas! Now strikes a hateful sound,
The jingle of the postern door;
It stings him like a poisoned wound,
And summons him to feed the poor.

A curse upsprings within his heart;
A dark frown shadows o'er his face;
The menial task, the drudge's part
Calls *yonder*; *here* is Christ's high grace.

He goes with pang and footstep slow,
Is long detained by hunger's moan;
He hastens back from mortal wo
To kiss the bare stone where He shone.

What tender voice breaks on his ear?
The light is as of Easter morn:
"As thou didst go, I still am here;
Hadst thou remained, I had been gone."

A DAY AT WILDWOOD

TO D. AND V. C. C.

We walked where Wildwood cools mid-summer heat,
Low curt'sies Cumberland to her lady high,
And from a Titan's apron at her feet,
Lays each good year's increase of husbandry.

We gazed across yon field of white and gold—
Ancestral acres aliened by Fate—
Each one a swelling mound of memories old,
Commemorating them the good and great,

Who gave her birth, for which she gives back Fame;
We peered into the eyes of portraits rare,
Some large of name, some tender—sweet, aflame
With soft affection's glow and beauty fair.

We heard discourse of distant scenes and lands,
Of heroes who had loved and died: Tear-mist
Suffused us, as, where Montë Sano stands,
Haze-curtaining clouds oft dim his amethyst.

And we had wept in woful sympathy
For ills that spare not any sons of men,
But for her laughter's mirthful symphony
That tunes the voiceful air of "Wildwood" glen.

This day, this crowded hour of joy and life
Was scarce a glimpse into her palace heart;
(who looks into that palace, treasure-rife,
Will linger long, reluctant to depart.)

We lived this hour and went our homeward way,
Yet not without a fervent prayer:—That ye,
Whose wit and wisdom Wildwood blends, aye may
Grow liker Wildwood and this vale-rich lea.

For grand simplicity sublime: In soul
And heart beyond most spirits mete or bound!
May ye for years unwind a love-writ scroll,
Of happier life than mortals e'er unwound!

MY PEOPLE FEED

"Till body up to spirit work."—MILTON.

Aforetime to young David,
Lineaged of God-like breed
By likeness to God's heart,
Through captains wont to lead,
There came the high command, "My people thou shalt
feed."

Man hungers in all time
For more than meat and mead,
His want is manifold:
There craveth many a need
To him who would obey, "My people shalt thou feed."

To gather richer harvests,
Increased from finer seed;—
To grow the rose, large life,
From circumstance, base weed—
Annoint for such emprise who would "the people
feed"!

And David, princely seer,
Of God's own heart indeed,
Oft sought to fill the mouth
Of that diviner greed
That prays with fervency, "Let *truth* thy people feed."

This is a bardic task,—
The poet's urgent need:
How far all other life
Soul-satisfyings exceed
God knows, and he who sings with psalms, "God's
own to feed."

OBSEQUIES

JEFFERSON DAVIS, NEW ORLEANS, DECEMBER 11, 1889.

With God's supernal light his form is clothed,
Naught save his mighty shade remain to us
And that immortal bloom—a martyr's fame.
Mid cannon used no more for dealing death;
With rifles, sabers crossed for solemn grief,
Not for the dread engendering of war;
With music's soulful chant thro' voice and trump,
And eloquence inspired of simple faith;
With every trapping true and holy grief
Can prompt, and floral tribute kings of earth
With Indian wealth might buy, but not evoke
From willing gardens of a continent;
With loyal offerings of a people's heart,
From all the sunny Southland stretched between
Louisian gulf and bounding oceans, sent
To breathe love's blessed fragrance and to weep
Womanly dew-drops of spontaneous woe—
His *eidolon* is sadly borne along
To where the chiseled form of Jackson stands,
Eternal sentinel of loved and lost:
Near *him*, the knightliest of a later time,
Who bade them bind the wounds of foemen first,—
Like Sidney, waved aside the draught of life
With smiles—"Tonight we quaff the Tennessee").
Here to the threshold of all-pacifying death,
Where effigies are dust by human love,
Whither comes life to moan sweet, long farewells
To those that, sun-lit, take the heavenly road;
Here in this chaste republic of the dead,
Where earthly grandeur clasps the loving hand
Of mortal humbleness, and all are free
From e'en the shackles of mortality:—
A people's loyal hands and tearful hearts
Bring him to sleep, to dream, to live again
In doubled life of heaven and earthly fame—

Bring *him* who never sought excuse nor plea
To bar his manful championship of truth;
Who never whispered "Pray excuse me!"* till
Gently repels he proffering hand, for now
His God's imperious orderly, great Death,
Commands him bivouac with the mighty dead:
All hearts are still in sunset's fitting hush;
No breath of scorn would blur the crystal calm.
Vale, soldier! Sunlike through gleam and storm
Thy spirit strove and shone; thro' death's brief night
Sunlike it circles to the brighter dawn.

* These words were whispered on his death-bed.

DEATH IN LIFE

'Tis eight o'clock in the morning,
The culminating moon at west;
A perfect day from its dawning,
As e'er maternal night expressed.

The soft wind blows with thrilling zest,
And all around in earth and sky,
Blithe sunshine makes it manifest
God's thought today is ecstasy.

If wine expressed from heavenly fruit
Had winnowed through cloud-filters laced,
And had been miracled to suit
Some finer sense than mortal taste,

It might give life, as does this air;
Apollo's strings were not more tense;
September murmurs everywhere
With trills of faint-heard instruments,

As if the sounds of all past days,
Ascending through the scale of time,
Had lost all accents save of praise,
And reached the height of perfect rhyme.

The mime-bird sings, outspreads his wings
On wavy curves from tree to tree;
Unruffling by his airy swings,
And by his carol's melody

The lake of grass or aught it holds;
Now close he whirs o'er yonder head:
Upsprings his foe; one stroke! He folds
His wings—the lilting voice lies dead.

O crystal Source of perfect thought!
This comfort in my heart distil
From bleeding Nature, parable-fraught,
That death's not ill, but Wisdom's will!

COURAGE! SOME REMAIN

Day's timid winds have taken flight
And fluttered thro' cloud lattices of light;
Delays one bolder breath of eve,
As loth to leave;

Yon cloud of doves, now fleeing fast,
Within far western vistas, dim and vast,
Leaves one of more courageous breast
Than all the rest.

In autumn, twilight of the year
November's icy fingers clutch, and drear
Frost eats all nuts and oaken mast,—
Yet one will last

The maddest blast of winter's rage;
And frail bamboo, with waxen feuillage,
In shivering vigil waits the sun,
A Red-Cross nun.

Tho' summer's fiery greed hath dried
The pear tree's sap till scarce one bloom abide
To tell of spring's embroidery,
All do not die;

For some will woo October's grace,
Forgive his moody days and smile apace
At his June-aping ways, and kiss
When his wish is.

When that mysterious plague, the dread
Germ—millioned midge dance, tropic gendered,
Seethes all the air with ghouls; Debauch
His pitchy torch

Enkindles for the time's despite,
And frenzied refugees thread Panic's night;
Then some high souls, affusing Christ,
Bid maelstrom whist.

Such loyal hearts, when all else flee,
And tumult, armed, throngs Hope's Gethsemane,
And Faith must die, turn eyes of mist
Toward Him, the Christ.

FIVE O'CLOCK TEA

(ON PRESENTING A TEA URN)

Life's haply come, my dear, for you and me,
To just this stage of cozy afternoon tea;
We've tasted blithe youth's many a fete,
'Tis sweeter now—the *duo* tete-a-tete.

If e'er the boiling urn was brewed too hot
Love's soothing curd would cool the silvern pot;
Life tenders some its wine unlike mine, thine,
Whose tenderness makes life a draught divine.

Infusing, steeping love in our lives, dear,
Thy fellowship extends a daily cheer;
Spiceful as Orient leaf, thy sweetness lures
Like fruit of island bowers: thy charm endures.
May life continue, sweet, for you and me
One glorious chat o'er deep-drawn, fragrant tea!

CARGOES OF LOVE

The soul is proven every day ; each hour
Life holds a mete-wand up to me and you,
To test the spirit's depth and girth and power,—
Whether the seasoned timbers hold yet true.

Of ember fineness this divining-rod,
The cargo silken-rich, the ballast gold ;
The ship-holds swell with freightage dear to God,
Pure samite tinct of heaven in bale and fold.

We are the ships (our unsure voyage Time) ;
They sail from Birth, and touch awhile at Death.
Our Coan silk, e'er sought of every clime
To vesture mart and home, airy as breath,

Is given, not bought with aught beneath the sun :
Its consignor hath sure been God above ;
The loom is Christ whereon it may be spun,
And all earth's isles be clothed with cloth of Love.

THE SPIRIT OF ART

Shapeless, yet with Ravana's twenty hands!
Invisible weaver at a mighty loom
Weaving the fabric of humanity's doom,
Whose brodered hem is bright with bord'ring strands

Of color, tone and subtly patterned shapes!
Teach us the secret of thy finger's skill!
Preach us a truth—art genius or self will?
Weave us a cloak, revealing what it drapes!

Unlike the patriarch, thou hast much wine
And art not drunken. Shem, Japheth—we
Must backward grope in trembling modesty
And clothe this shining nakedness of thine.

For whoso wise, and with a reverent heart,
Will strip himself to lend thee of his dress,
Shall know the blessing of thy tenderness,
And dwell forever in the tents of Art.

THREE LIONS OF OERTEL

"EX UNGUE LEONEM"

Potency asleep, a-dream in every limb!
His large Thor-hammer paws upon the earth
Caress it as a plaything, kitten-like for him,
Did his big bulk of slumber wake to mirth.

With what complete surrender of his selfish all,—
The wind-tossed pleasure of each wayward hour,—
Doth yonder cub his childish play let fall
And close against Sleep's tawny shoulder cower!

But thou, pale lioness with uplifted face!
Art thou a woman prisoned in that guise?
For unfierce watchfulness and human grace
Of high maternity have lit thine eyes.

WILHELMEIN

A PORTRAIT

A patient sadness in the lovely face
That melts to tenderness within the eyes,
Now dark, now bright, as in the dew drop lies
A shadow brightening in a sunny place:
Shy dimples in the cheeks that come and go
As laughter rises from the brimming heart:
Soft folds of lustrous hair; lips half apart
As if a kiss escaped and left them so:
One fair hand thrown aside in careless gesture
To grasp the rose down-fallen in her vesture:—
The rose is passing sweet yet lacks it grace
To keep me longer from that sweeter face.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

TO ALL WHO LOVE SIDNEY LANIER

As in one planet-mocking globe of dew,
May lucent glow the full-spanned arc of blue:

Since one clear stroke of Time's star-guiding bell
Unending happiness or woe may tell:

Since came a world of light from just one word
Of God, and all the stars of Morning heard:—

Then let one murmured word for me express
A fervent round of grateful tenderness.

LOVE AND LIFE.*

Life leadeth Love along the world's strange way:
The one is bright of cheek and hair and eyes:
Dim shadows round the other interplay
And weave their darkness: where surely should be
The smile expectant, welcoming blest surprise,
Pale sorrow, wan, emaciate and gray
As were a hopeless Rachel's pallid skies,
And ashen as despair, veils carefully.
Light garments Life and paints her ripeness gay:
Will Love her darkling body lose, and rise
On viewless wing, and vanish utterly?

*Watts' Painting, Kensington Museum.

THE HAPPIEST

If now the Master of the feast should stand,
Seeking the happiest at life's festal board,
To crown him King with garlands and to hand
To him the joy-brimmed, silver, carven gourd

Of happiness to quaff—whose should it be?
His, rich in pleasures gathered from all parts
Of earth? Nay, nay, the happiest is he
Who garners joy from joys of others' hearts.

HYMN TO THE GREAT ARTIST

Watery seas He folds in a vesture of cloud
And the hearts of their shells be molds,
Till these utter their multiple music aloud,
And rapture of speech bursts the clod that he holds.

For dumbness is not of the work of the Lord:
Star spaces and far feel the breath of his flute.
Day breathes to the night, night fugues all abroad,
Where far-streaming star-beams are strings of his
lute.

METRIC GENESIS

The poet brings not something out of naught;
He breathes into a dream;—Lo!—Adam—Thought!

Dumb lonesome thought for want of music weeps,
And rhythm—Eve—discloses as he sleeps;

Whence God does set his seal upon the pair—
Speech Eden is, with Eve and Adam there.

SONNETS



"FOR FALSTAFF HE IS DEAD"

Doth better grow the world since roguish Jack
 Marshaled his motley crew, befooled his pal,
 And played disgraceful pranks with Princeling Hal,
 And passed? Alack! there yet be cakes and sack.
 Old Knight, of nature did thy mischiefs smack;
 How broad the laugh, how big thy generous heart!
 If large the bad, larger the nobler part;
 And thy forgiveness huge as was thy back!

Still War's alarums vex, as yore in France;
 New players match new rackets to the balls,
 And Tennis yields to hazards *Red* and *Black*;
 Sweet life is shaken by fresh gales of chance;
 Above the storm's hoarse voice the gambler calls,
 And ginger's hot, tho' passed is honest Jack.

PRINCE HARRY BECOMING KING

*" . . . Consideration like an angel came,
 And whipped th' offending Adam out of him."*

Well, go thy ways, old Jack! Death is to all.
 To win fair France go I; thou goest to—
 Whither? Nor Hell nor Heaven can say thee no;
 The one thou'lt turn to other; an chance befall
 Thou'lt rob Apollyon of his funeral pall;
 And, with Seraphic George and Michael, lo!
 Thou'lt marshal buckramed Angels rank on row
 Beyond those Ancients' longest roster call.

And now, 'tis not thou parting but Prince Hal;
 Ambition babbles of green fields o'er sea;
 Dies all unkingly in me past recall.
 Great England's *christom* child and King, I shall
 To Harfleur on. Saint George and Victory!
 Fame's triumphs are for some. Christ died for all.

JOAN OF ARC

In simple faith and majesty of mind,
Amid Domremy's cots, this child of France—
Of Gaul, shot thro' with feudal circumstance—
A missal whose illuminations bind,
With saintly texts of Mediæval kind,
Pictures whereon faint souls might look askance—
This maid is born, dreams, prays and seizes lance,
And leads the van, that haply France may find
And crown her Dauphin King. A homely land
Had Merlin prophesied would give her birth,
And visions glorified this rustic world.
Whence learned she this strange greatness of command?
Oft, rimming pools, tall lilies are unfurled;
Sometimes the highest Heavens touch lowliest earth.

A POET'S GRAVE

As now I pace to yonder hallowed ground,
Where slanting sunlight through the tinted trees
Hushes to ethereal whispers every breeze,
And seems angelic every forest sound,
I pause, uncertain if this earthly mound
By violets glorified and these lilies,
Be not heaven's portal that now opes and frees
My raptured soul from all this mortal round.
It was a poet who once slumbered here,
And poet's dreams remain where they have slept
The dreaming men call death. Immortally
They frame to harmony that atmosphere
Heaven throbs to them and otherwise had kept
Till shrivel earth and sky supernally.

SONNET

To Mrs. Vinnie Ream Hoxie on leaving Montgomery, December 16, 1888.

Fame, honor and remembrance live in time
For those who worthily have sung or wrought;
One name is chapleted with blooms of rhyme,
Another festooned o'er with braids of thought.
Essaying fame, the mailed soldier stamps,
And prints an image rude of cruel deeds;
Forgiving Love forgets his frowning camps,
And writes in moss her loveliest creed of creeds.
To us you bind yourself with triple chain,
Sculptor, poet, above all else a friend!
Thus recollection strives to soothe our pain,
And would with tenderness our grief amend—
"To all the world she speaks in shapes of Art—
For us she rhymes our souls with her own heart!"

BENVENUTO CELLINI

Thou, sculptor, bravo, craftsman cunning, bold,
Musician, poet, man of many parts,
Thy time's most fervid lover of such arts
As body forth rare forms in bronze and gold!
Epitome of them who leave the old,
And ever seek fresh ventures of new marts;—
Born where the flowing Arno streams and darts,
To warm in sun his flower-dipped waters cold:—

Thou art the type of bankrupt souls' sad loss,
Who come so close to fortune and true gain;
Like fallen angels shut from out Heaven's gate
They miss Elysium by a coin's toss,
And glory straitly missed redoubles pain:—
Thine art, Christ-touched, had been immaculate!

THE MEN BEHIND THE "BOOKS"

From cabined walls of close-ranged dusty shelves,
Whereon the effigies of great thoughts are
In print, mine inner sense would break the bar
And find the treasury of their inmost selves;—
Shakspeare's, while visioning midsummer elves
With queen Titania in her wee nut car;
With dreaming poets range from star to star,
Or plunge in caverns plumbing science delves;
To gaze beyond this pale on Keats' dear soul,—
Endymion 'mong the stars of Beauty's sky;
On Milton's hearing Heavenly battles roll;
Thro' Wordsworth's, know each tender flowerets eye;
With humble workers study moss and clod,
And with brave singers feel the breath of God.

IN A LIBRARY.

O love of books, what comradeship is thine!
What stimulus of strife without its sting!
Here old Time's warriors their trophies bring
With scent of classic fields and hint of brine
From Faery oceans, Fancy's eglantine,
The towers of Romance wheraround memories
cling,
With song-breaths poets' hearts cease not to sing,
And stories told of men become divine.
Who would not cleave the actual life in twain
And yield Imagination this her due?
To act the petty round is only half
Of life and keeps our living small and vain.
O choose we wisely what the mind may quaff,
And catholic life in books is sweet and true!

GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

We know not the very heart of the lute;
We only hear the beat of music's wings—
The garment's rustle as it shaping clings
About the bodied soul—whether low flute
Or trumpet's large world-full resounding bruit
That summons to enchant the state of kings;—
We hear the organ's far-drawn murmurings,
But from the holiest Holy all is mute;
Maybe we host an angel unaware;
We cherish knowledge, tongues and prophecies,
Forgetful how these vanish into air
Whereof they frame their winning mysteries.
Love, love alone, in music, life, and art,
Remains the angelic friend-guest of the heart.

THE GOSPEL OF MEDITATION

Thou art considerate, O Solitude!
So truly bland thy welcome is for me
That on thy privacy I must intrude:
Why smilest thou on my poor company,—
Because thy cloisters oft my sweet joys be?
Yea, therein swarming fancies free do brood,
And images do people pleasantly
Arcadian forests. Ah! thy neighborhood
Brings magic balm to heal the ailing soul:
No sordid changer trades within thy court,
Nor sacrifice ungrateful therein brings.
Hushed voices thro' thine aisles this message roll:—
"Whate'er is lovely, pure, of good report
And true, ye meek of heart, think on these things!"

THE FIRST CONFEDERATE WHITE HOUSE,
MONTGOMERY, ALA.

Memento-hallowed of heroic Lost,
Nor time, nor rust hath power to despoil,
Nor hate besmirch thee with deflow'ring moi!
The pain of martyrs made thy priceless cost,
With outpoured blood of brave Confederate host,
And free-will offerings pure of corn and oil;
Thus thou art worthy countless lovers' toil;
Who suffered all for love now love thee most.
Reborn, rechristened, and by love new-made,
Thou art the dearer for what ruin wrought;
With thee let treasured memories be laid
For keeping, as to shrines our dead are brought;
Let Truth of history gem thy casket gold,
And thou stay ever new, yet ever old.

WILLIAM L. YANCEY

Type of a wondrous line that wrought and passed!
Ripe product of the ancientest seeds that grew
In eldest lands, yet native to our new
Old South! Lover of his kind, nurtured in caste.
Conservative, tho' fierce iconoclast!
Aristocrat, defender honor-true
Of humblest slave who e'er injustice knew;
Afraid of no man, but at wrong aghast!
Perfervid prophet to a fervid age,
He uttered words that flamed his fiery time:
The state-craft launched on oratory's rage
Floats derelict mid war's mad surge and grime;
Yet Truth, for love of history, shall save
This magic flotsam of secession's wave.

HIS SILENT FLUTE.

TO S. L., 1881

Each life is tinct with joyousness and pain :—
A web of measured silences and sound
In subtle plan of patterns deftly wound,
And with a heart of love is Music. Rain,
Sunshine, are tides of one wavering Main
Whose throbbing bears the prow of life to port :
E'en on the parapet of Hatred's fort
Some bruised violet of love will fain
Its banner wave for Brotherhood and God :
Such alternates do flock the whole vast round :—
A star, a comet lost is a planet found :
This comfort would I take from star and clod,—
I hear it murmuring from his silent flute,—
"Death is not death, but life that's briefly mute."

TO A POET DYING YOUNG

S. L.

Much like some mountain-springing crystal rill,
Or burgeoning of trees that bravely climb
The sunniest crag of all ; now like the mime
Of mock-bird trilling gaily, then death-still,
As if his mate-bird's answer hushed his trill,
Or some god whispered in his ear, "'Tis time
For holy meditation,"—so thy rhyme
Did falter seeking beauty and love's will.
Too short, ah ! sadly short, thy days for song,
For work, for prayer, for far-envoyaging thought.
Ah, me ! no time nor strength for righting wrong
Thy soul well knew man's apathy had wrought.
Thou couldst but trill, as thou didst limp along,
High hints of music's heaven thy soul had caught.

PUELLA LAUREATA

TO ——— ———

Maker of novels, drama and of song:
Trident-swayer of emotion's trembling sea!
Thou fragile masterdom of ecstasy,
Serenely floating yon high waves among!
Feminine Prospero, whose magic tongue
Doth wing Sprite-Ariels of Poesy
And vassal Calibans of fantasy,
Till seems the sea a charmed isle up-sprung:
And maiden thoughts Mirandas are, whose grace
Appeals to wonder, to our love and praise,—
In beauty far out-speeding e'en the spite
Of swift detraction! Bide in such high case
The woman still thou art for tenderest ways,
And reign, girl—Prospera, an isle's delight.

A MODERN PARACELSUS

All hidden lore of Nature's school he knew,
A Paracelsus grave with subtle skill
To probe and find the body's inmost ill,
Turning to joyful health the ailment's rue.
Physician's wit and art the sourest brew
Of chemic drug may sweeten, and his touch
Send healing from the hem; who loveth much
May work such miracles as angels do.
Alas! within the mind a demon lurked,
As, legends tell, wrought in the pommeled hilt
Of Paracelsus' sword. Yea, Tophet burned;
His health-winged smile a leer became; there worked
Through all his veins a keen infecting guilt:
Evanished skill when love to hatred turned.

THE SATIRIST JAY

Thou strident orator of peopled wood,
Light-bringer in dusk aisles of oaken green,
Thou scornful-throated wrangler, pranked in sheen!
When out of leaf-hid sylvan solitude
Thou puttest on high airs of social mood
And archest crest, thy steel-blue eyes between,
Mayhap of birds thou'rt Swift, satiric Dean
Of feathered citizens that nest and brood.
Thou winnest love; whom will not lovers bless?
With birds their Stellas and Vanessas live.
Art wretched thou as that great satirist?
Doth woe infect the tenderest caress
Thy victimed sweethearts fondly, freely give,
As, King of wit, Swift, was by ruin kissed?

QUATRAINS



BROWNING

With him it is not *hearsay*—how that one
Of olden time commanded halt the sun :
Revealings his within his own soul furled !
He *knows* that God's in, thro', and o'er His world.

THE OPIUM DREAMER

The drowsy poppy from Earth's sleep hath caught
Vagaries that with Heavenly visions teem :
De Quincey ! thou distillest from all thought
The very *juice* of thought—coherent dream !

THE GREAT TEACHER

A thought of science,—brightest light is dark,
Till earthly air infuse the Heavenly spark !
And spake the Teacher :—"Seek with love and find
The very wisdom of Christ's heart and mind !"

SORROW'S RAINBOW

How bright the light, when sorrow's storms are still !
In this the Deluge finds a counterpart.
That bliss shall follow woe is Heaven's sweet will ;
And tears, smile-lit, make rainbows in the heart.

BROWNING

Thou world-explaining optimist, a Job
That ne'er desponds and feels all joy, all pain,
From palm-aphid's to Shah of all the globe!
Who riddles loves not—sings with thee in vain!

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Dreaming along the haunted shore of time
And mad that sea's Æolian song to sing,
He found the shell of beauty, rhythmic rhyme,
And fondly deemed its sheen a living thing.

KEATS AND FANNY B——

A star beheld an image in a spring
His own beams robed in heavenly vesturing;—
Out-burned his fire, and faded from the sky:
The clear earth-rill purled on indifferently.

TRANSFORMATION

The humblest life that lives may be divine;
Christ changed the common water into wine.
Star-like comes Love from out the magic East,—
And Life, an hungered, finds his fast a feast.

WIDOWED: ALONE IN MANILA

Ten thousand miles of sea to reach her child;
One hour for kneeling at her husband's grave!
Pray Heaven that all contrariant winds be mild!
Her soul lags here; her heart sways o'er the wave.

THE SAVIOUR'S GOOD-BY

(A PARAPHRASE.)

Within my Father's house all mansions are;
Where I abide there shall ye also dwell:—
Transcending cloud and sea and earth and star,
To comfort you the Spirit comes afar.

DIALECT POEMS



Two of these dialect poems by Sidney and Clifford Lanier are reprinted from "Poems by Sidney Lanier," through the kind permission of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE POWER OF PRAYER: OR
THE FIRST STEAMBOAT UP THE ALABAMA

BY SIDNEY AND CLIFFORD LANIER

You, Dinah! Come and set me whar de ribber-roads
dey meet,
De Lord, *He* made dese black-jack roots to twis' in-
to a seat:
Umph, dar! De Lord hab mussy on dis blin' ole nig-
ger's feet!

It 'pear to me dis mornin' I kin smell de fust o' June:
I 'clar, I b'lieve dat mockin-bird kin play de fiddle
soon!
Dem yonder town-bells soun's like dey was ringin' in
de moon!

Well, ef dis nigger *is* bin blin' for fohty years or mo',
Dese ears, *dey* sees de world, like thru' de cracks
dat's in de do':
Fur de Lord has built dis body wid de windows side
an' fo'.

I know my front ones *is* stopped up, and things *is*
sort o' dim:
But den, thu *dem*, temptation's rain won't leak in
on ole Jim:
De side ones shows me Earth enuff, aldo' deys mon-
s'ous slim.

An' as fur Hebben,—bless de Lord, an' praise his
holy name,—
Dat shines in all de corners of dis cabin just de
same
As ef dat cabin hadn't nary plank upon de frame!

Who *call* me? Lissen down de ribber, Dinah! don'
you hyar
Somebody hollin "*Hoo, Jim, Hoo!*" My Sarah died
las' y'ar:

*Is dat black angel done come back to call ole Jim
f'om hy'ar?*

My stars, dat cain't be Sarah, sho! Jes' lissen, Dinah, now!

What kin be comin' up dat bend, a-makin' sich a row?

Fus' bellerin' like a pawin' bull, den squealin' like a sow?

De Lord 'a 'mussy sakes alive, jes hear, Ker-whoof, Ker-whoof—

De Debble's comin' round dat bend, he's comin' sho' ernuff,

A-splashin' up de water wid his tail an' wid his hoof!

I'se pow'ful skeered: but neversomeless I ain't gwine run away:

I'm gwine to stand stiff-leggèd for de Lord dis blessed day:

You screech an' swish de water, Satan! I'se a gwine to pray.

O Hebbenly Marster, what thou willest, dat mus' be jes so:

An' ef thou hast bespoke de word, some nigger's bound to go:

Den, Lord, please take ole Jim, an' lef young Dinah hyar below!

'Scuse Dinah, scuse her, Marster: fer she's sich a little chile:

She hardly jes begin to scramble up de homeyard stile:

But dis ole trav'ller's feet bin tired dis many a many a mile!

I'se wuffless as de rotten pole of las' year's fodder stack:

De rheumatiz done bit my bones: You hear 'em crack an' crack?

I cain't set down 'thout gruntin' like 't was breakin'
o' my back,

What use de wheel, when hub an' spokes is warped,
an' split, an' rotten?

What use dis dried-up cotton-stalk, when Time done
picked de cotton?

I'se like a word somebody said, an' den done bin' for-
gotten.

But Dinah! Sho dat gal jis like dis little hick'ry tree:
De sap's jes' risin' in her: she do grow owdacious-
lee—

Lord, ef you's clarin' de underbrush, doan' cut her
down, cut me!

I would not proud presume—but I'll des boldly make
request:

Sence Jacob had dat wrastlin' match, I boun' to do
my bes':

When Jacob got all underholt, de Lord, he answered
Yes!

An' what fur waste de vittles now, an' th'ow away de
bread,

Jes' fur to strength dese idle hands to scratch dis ole
bald head?

T'ink of de 'conomy, Marster, ef dis ol Jim was dead:

Stop:—ef I don' b'lieve de Debble's done gone up de
stream!

Jes' now he squealed down dar:—hush! dat's a
mighty weakly scream!

Yas, sir, he's gone, he's gone:—he snort way off,
like in a dream!

O glory hallelujah to de Lord what reign on high!
De Debble's fairly skeered to def, he done gone flyin'
by:

I know'd he couldn' stand dat pra'r, I felt my Mars-
ter nigh!

You, Dinah: ain't you shame now, dat you didn'
truss' to grace?

I heerd you thrashin' th'u' de bushes when he showed
his face!

You fool, you think de debble couldn' beat you in a
race?

I tell you, Dinah, jes as sho as you is standin' dar,
When folks starts prayin', answer—angels drops
down th'u' de a'r.

*Yas, Dinah whar 'ould you be now, jes 'ceppen' fur
dat pr'ar?*

THE POWER OF AFFECTION; OR, VOTING
IN ALABAMA

What dat you say? Haynh? vote for you? ain't nuv-
ver seed you buffore;
I don' know what to call you by: my name? hit's
uncle Sim.
Don' tel me nuffi'n 'bout votin', Boss, I'se fur ole
Marster shore:
He nuvver went back on dis black chile: I ain't gwine
back on him.

Would *you exert* de fren' dat fed you, howsumduvver
poor
He got his se'f, an' gin' you work, when work was
mon'sous slim?
Don' tel me nuffi'n 'bout votin', Boss, I'se fur ole
Marster shore:
He nuvver went back on dis black chile: I'se gwine
to stay 'bout him.

When de creek was up an' drowned de corn, an' riz
to dis here door,
Who gin' me 'lasses an' meal an' sich? Congress? no
more'n dat limb.
Don' tel me nuffi'n 'bout votin', Boss, I'se fur ole
Marster shore:
He nuvver went back on dis black chile: I'se boun' to
stick roun' him.

De word's bin saunt fum up town dar, dis two, free
days and more,
How we 'uns is to vote: (Yaas, sir, Pintlala'l make
you swim;)
Don' tel me nuffi'n 'bout votin', Boss, I'se fur ole
Marster shore:
He nuvver went back on dis black chile: I'se gwine to
vote 'side him.

Convenshun dis! Convenshun dat! 'an black men on
de floor!

I aint nuvver seed no *forty* yit; is't kase my eyes is
dim?

Don' tel me nuffi'n 'bout votin', Boss, I'se fur ole
Marster shore:

He nuvver went back on dis black chile: I'se gwine to
shares wid him.

I'se voted ev'ry 'lection yit for Ekal rights; I'se tore
My insides out a holl'rin fur em; I'se yit *ole nigger*
Sim;

Don' tel me nuffi'n 'bout votin', Boss, I'se fur ole
Marster shore:

He nuvver went back on dis black chile: I'se gwine to
bawl fur him.

Mehaly, she kin read de news (my wife, but you don'
know 'er,)

She says de Rads jis loves us nigs, like *gar fish loves*
de brim;

Don' tel me nuffi'n 'bout votin', Boss, I'se fur ole
Marster shore:

He nuvver went back on dis black chile: I'se gwine to
use 'long him.

Dey's rid our votes to offis 'till our backs is skinned
an' sore;

Dey's fooled *young* mules wid *collar straw*, dey *caint*
fool uncle Sim;

Don' tel me nuffi'n 'bout votin', Boss, I'se fur ole
Marster shore:

He nuvver went back on dis black chile: I aint gwine
back on him.

UNCLE JIM'S BAPTIST REVIVAL HYMN

BY SIDNEY AND CLIFFORD LANIER

Sin's rooster's crowed, Ole Mahster's riz,
De sleepin' time is pas';
Wake up dem lazy Baptissis.

*Chorus: Dey's mighty in de grass, grass,
Dey's mighty in de grass.*

Ole mahster's blowed de mornin' horn,
He's blowed a powerful blas';
O Baptis' come, come hoe de corn,
You's mighty in de grass, etc.

De Meth'dis' team's done hitched; O fool,
De day's a-breakin' fas';
Gear up dat lean ole Baptis' mule,
Dey's mighty in de grass, etc.

De workmen's few an' mons'rous slow,
De cotton's sheddin' fas';
Whoop, look, jes' look at de Baptis' row
Hit's mighty in de grass, etc.

De jaybird squeal to de mockin'-bird: "Stop!
Do'n gimme none o'yo' saas;
Beter sing one song for de Baptis' crop,
Dey's mighty in de grass," etc.

An' de ole crow croak: "Do'n' work, no, no;"
But de fiel'-lark say: "Yaas, yaas,
An' I spec' you mighty glad, you debblish crow,
Dat de Baptissis's in de grass, etc.

Lord, thunder us up to de plowin' match,
Lord, peerten de hoein' fas';
Yea, Lord, hab mussy on de Baptis' patch,—
*Dey's mighty in de grass, grass,
Dey's mighty in de grass.*

THE WESTERN GATE

Gold in the morn. Silver shine at noon.
Gold after noon! 'Tis twilight now;
Dusk wanes the day; old voices croon,
And pale the aureole on age's brow.
Fitful the flame upon the cottage fire
Burns like the heart of chill desire;
The limbs with ache like worn-out timbers creak,
And scarce the smoke may climb the chimney peak.
Dim sounds of uproar that the Present makes
Come through the window; Memory fonder shakes
Old sides to laughter and old hearts to tears;
All brave delights of youth give way to fears;
Grandchildren romp not with the glee of yore;
A sadness never felt before
Creeps in the mind; the hand clasps not as strong;
New songs sing not as that old song,
Clear with the truth
Of candid youth,
And sweet forsooth
As the limpid, twinkling sheen of the Romance well,
Or sweetheart-gospels lovers tell—
As truest chime of the marriage bell,
As loveliest child-bloom ever fell
From gardens where home-blisses grow
And joys of heaven with angels dwell
And Love's uncankered roses blow.
Cometh now life's afterglow;
O'er yonder sun the clouds drift slow
Like sleepy birds that seek the nest
On drowsy-moving wings almost at rest,
So smooth their flight into yon darkling West.

Gold in the morn. Silver shine at noon.
Gold after noon! New soft lights beam
Whereof the heart of youth may merely dream;
Pearl, amber, lucent sard are in yon gleam.
In circles ever moveth life around
Without decline; eve puts no term nor bound;
Age at old portals is await
For that new scene beyond the gate.
This little grain of life was sweet; how grand
The planetary round of God's new land!

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